



# The HHSA Connection

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2005

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

## Working Together to Stop the Cycle of Addiction and Abuse

### *Dependency Court Recovery Project*

**T**wo wrongs definitely do not make a right - especially when it comes to caring for children. With this in mind, the Dependency Court Recovery Project was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1997 and implemented in 1998. The project is a model program to break the devastating link between substance abuse and child abuse and neglect.

Before, delays in access to alcohol and drug treatment services for parents involved with Child Welfare Services led to delays in finding care solutions for children who are at risk due to parental substance abuse. System-wide changes were necessary to speed up access to treatment services and decrease time to reunify or permanently place children.

Through better coordination, parents get substance abuse case management and treatment faster, and

their children are placed in safe, supportive living arrangements. Another result of the initiative is improved timeliness of court decisions so children are protected from further neglect or abuse, and from disruptive stays in foster care placements.

HHSA's Child Welfare Services and Alcohol and Drug Services worked with the Superior Court to make the vision of timely access to substance abuse treatment for these parents a reality.

On January 11, the Board accepted funds from the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs to expand this successful project to serve an additional 121 parents annually.

### Working for Kids!



### CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: SENIOR CLERK

## Pursuing a Career in Health

### *Enjoying the Variety on the Way*

**F**rom one day to the next, Ernest Salinas doesn't know exactly what he'll be doing, but that's OK with him.

Salinas, a senior clerk with Southeast Mental Health, gets assigned to a variety of tasks, in addition to his regular duties. He wants exposure to the many facets of public health.

"My manager and supervisors back me up and give me the freedom to try different things," he says. "I'm very lucky."

Salinas, who is a surgical technician, started with HHSA eight years ago as an ICT at the Public Health Center in El Cajon, where he did intake interviews for those coming to get immunizations or be tested for tuberculosis or sexually transmitted diseases. He took his current job five years ago.

Two weekends a month, Salinas is on call with the UCSD Lifesharing program, where he is a tissue harvester, harvesting organs, veins and skin for transplant. He is now focusing his career goals on becoming a laboratory microbiologist, and hopes to start school mid-year.



Salinas is an enthusiastic student of health.

## A Message from Jean Shepard *Agency Director*

**W**hile the Agency is comprised of many different experts, it's only by working together that we help develop safe, healthy and thriving communities. (See pages 4-5.)

To reach our goals, we also need to work with the other County departments. Just a few examples include: our Public Health Division working with the Land Use and Environment Group to combat West Nile virus; Child Welfare Services partnering with Public Safety to protect children; and several Agency programs working with Community Services to address homelessness.

Together, we have the power of more than 16,000! And, our efforts do not go unnoticed. In addition to belonging to many industry associations, the Agency has received extensive recognition (see pages 6-7).  
Way to go, team!



*Jean Shepard*

### Cozy Feelings Inside and Out *Blankets of Love National Community Service Project Makes Positive Impact in San Diego*

**T**his year's American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences annual meeting in San Diego was marked by a special community service outreach event called *Blankets of Love*.

States across the nation were called upon to gather fleece material representative of the people and culture of their region and transport it to San Diego. More than 80 student members contributed to the creation of 45 fleece blankets with the following inscription:

*"This Blanket of Love has been created especially for you by student members of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. May it bring you comfort and love during your time of need!"*

The blankets were officially presented to **Karen Barch**, coordinator of the Child Welfare Services Options For Recovery Foster Care, a program designed to provide training and support for foster parents and relatives caring for drug exposed and/or HIV positive babies and toddlers.

San Diego County foster parents and relatives will receive the blankets as they graduate from the Options specialized training provided by the Chadwick Center at Children's Hospital. They will travel with the child until he/she is reunited with his/her birth parent or placed with an adoptive family.



From left: Tiffani Calmes, CFCS, P/GS Secretary; Barbie Caldwell, foster parent; Karen Barch, Options for Recovery Foster Care Program Coordinator; and Heather Jones, CFCS, P/GS Chair, display finished blankets at the Blankets of Love Community Service Project Presentation.

## Public Health Services

Working for Communities!

### How Do We Measure Up?

#### *HHSA Health Statistics Unit Takes a Look at the Scale*

**T**he New Year kickoff is always a great time to take a little health inventory. To give you some perspective, here is statistical information provided for the January 2005 edition of *San Diego Physician* magazine:

- 34% of adult San Diego County residents are overweight (Body Mass Index more than 25 and less than 30), compared with 36% of all Californians.<sup>1</sup>
- 37% of adult San Diego County residents consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day, compared with 51% of all Californians.<sup>1</sup>

To request additional health statistics describing health behaviors, diseases and injuries for specific populations, health trends and comparisons to national targets, please call the Agency's Community Health Statistics Unit at (619) 515-4318. To access the latest data and data links, including the 2004 Core Public Health Indicators document, go to [www.sdhealthstatistics.com](http://www.sdhealthstatistics.com).

1. California Health Interview Survey, 2001, Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, July 2002.





## Toys For Tots Comes to North Coastal and Inland Family Resource Centers

### *Making Holidays Bright*

**A**rmed with carts and hand trucks, volunteers waited one December morning for a moving truck (donated by BKM Total Office for the day) to pull into the North County Family Resource Centers (FRCs) from the Miramar Marine Air Station. Each year, the North Inland and North Coastal FRCs participate in the annual United States Marines Toys for Tots program. This exceptional program provides toys for children of low-income families, many of whom receive services from our Agency. Staff identify qualifying families and children, contact them to see if they wish to participate in the program, and see that the toys are distributed to the families prior to Christmas. Much of the work is on a volunteer basis, using the employees' personal time. This year, local Boy and Girl Scout troops assisted at the North Coastal FRC.



Volunteers organize toys donated for more than 1,300 children.

In North Coastal, families arrived bright and early December 11 to receive their presents on "Merry Gifting Day." Toys were provided to more than 800 children who may have had little or nothing under the tree. In North Inland, gifts were distributed over the following week, with nearly 500 children receiving toys to make their holidays a little brighter.

Special thanks goes to staff **Dottie Seymour** and **Karen Vorwerk** (North Coastal FRC), and **Liz Watson** (North Inland FRC) who provided coordination assistance, as well as the more than 30 staff who volunteered to unload, sort and distribute the toys to the families. Each person's effort was appreciated in helping these children!

**O**n December 13, more than 350 guests were treated to a holiday party thrown by the HHSA North Coastal and North Inland Regions and community partners for foster children and kinship families. The event, held at Green Oak Ranch, included dinner and craft activities. The evening was highlighted by a visit from Santa, who brought gift bags that were put together by faith community and high school partners. Other volunteers included HHSA Children's Services and Family Resource Centers, North County Foster Parent Association, New Alternatives, Green Oak Ranch, Friends & Family Community Connections, Palomar Pomerado Hospital, and HHSA retirees. Families and volunteers considered the holiday party (the fifth so far) the greatest one yet. Additional activities benefiting foster and kinship families were also held throughout the holiday season.

### **Ready to Get Healthy? Need to Save Money?**

**D**id you know...As a County employee, you can do both! [24-Hour Fitness](#) offers exercise facilities and a money-saving offer for you - free enrollment and processing. Monthly fees vary from \$24 to \$34. For information and to enroll, contact Mary Margaret Rosati at [mrosati@24hourfit.com](mailto:mrosati@24hourfit.com), or, call her: 800-600-2007, ext. 2634. [Check out this and lots of other great health information and links](#) on the County's Intranet site.



The HHSA operates in conjunction with other departments of the San Diego County government. Here's a glance at all of the groups and some examples of how we partner.

### Public Safety Group

- Sheriff
- Child Support Services
- Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board
- Office of Emergency Services
- Medical Examiner
- Probation Department
- Public Defender



HHSA and PSG work together to reduce domestic violence and protect children.

The PSG [Office of Emergency Services](#) plays a key role in bioterrorism preparedness, partnering with HHSA to develop drills, plans and messages.

### Health and Human Services Agency

- Regional Operations
- Regional Program Support
- Aging & Independence Services
- Behavioral Health Services
- Child Welfare Services
- Public Health Services
- Administrative Support



Community Partners provide many services to Agency clients, including health, mentorship, treatment, and volunteering.

HHSA and LUEG work together to combat the threat of [West Nile Virus](#) in San Diego. LUEG handles the environmental aspects, such as treating water for larvae, while the HHSA handles the public health concerns.

HHSA and LUEG also work together for San Diego's kids - Parks and Recreation provides opportunities and places for healthy activities.



### Land Use and Environment Group

- Executive Office
- San Diego Geographic Information Source (SanGIS)
- Trade and Business Development
- Agriculture Weights & Measures
- Air Pollution Control District
- Environmental Health
- Farm and Home Advisor
- Parks and Recreation
- Planning and Land Use
- Public Works

### Community Services Group



- Executive Office
- Animal Services
- County Library
- General Services
- Housing and Community Development
- Purchasing and Contracting
- San Diego County Redevelopment Agency
- Registrar of Voters

CSG's [Housing and Community Development](#) helps HHSA provide housing for substance abusing parents through the Dependency Court Recovery Project (see page 1).

CSG's [General Services](#) keeps many facilities well maintained and operating efficiently, from the San Pasqual Academy, to the parking lot at your building.

The Board of Supervisors help set priorities and make the interdepartmental connections imperative.



HHSA and FG3's [County Counsel](#) work together in sensitive child welfare cases.

### Finance and General Government Group



- Executive Office
- Board of Supervisors
- Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk
- Treasurer-Tax Collector
- Chief Administrative Office
- Auditor and Controller
- County Technology Office
- Civil Service Commission
- Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
- County Counsel
- San Diego County Grand Jury
- Human Resources
- Media and Public Relations
- County Administration Center Major Maintenance

This fictional scenario displays how County departments can and do work together to help San Diego residents improve their quality of life.

**FAMILY**  
**Mom Doe** - unemployed, pregnant  
**Dad Doe** - abusive to family, substance abuser  
**Grandmother Doe** - lives with daughter, limited income  
**Teen** - gang activities, including crime, substance abuse  
**Pre-teen** - problems at school, poor health  
**Pre-schooler** - lacking general care and age-level education

**Animal Services**

**Sheriff**  
 Responds to call reporting domestic or animal abuse

**Emergency Services (Ambulance)**

**Domestic Violence Review Team**  
 Law Enforcement  
 Domestic Violence Service Provider  
 Child Protective Services  
 Adult Protective Services  
 Public Health Nurse  
 Hospitals  
 Animal Control/Humane Society  
 Victim Assistance Program

**Battered Women's Shelter**

Board of Supervisors oversees implementation of County Strategic Initiatives: Kids; the Environment; and Safe and Livable Communities.

**Behavioral Health**  
 Alcohol and Drug Services  
 Adult Mental Health  
 Children's Mental Health

- Dad gets referred for substance abuse counseling;
- Mom and two younger kids get mental health counseling;
- Teen works with counselors while at Juvenile Detention

**Child Welfare Services**

**Polinsky**  
 Temporary care  
 Physical and psychological care  
 When appropriate, the children return home

**County Counsel**  
 Provides guidance to Agency in legal situations

**Parks and Recreation**

Kids do healthy outdoor activities, improving health and fighting obesity

**Self-Sufficiency**  
 Medi-Cal  
 Food Stamps  
 Job Training  
 Housing Assistance  
 Child Care

**Critical Hours**  
 Pre-teen gets supervision before and after school hours

**WIC**  
 Mom can provide good nutrition for kids

**Headstart Program**  
 Pre-schooler gets valuable early education

**Aging & Independence Services**

Grandmother gets new care provider, and an array of services

**Housing and Community Development**

Grandmother finds new housing

**Public Health**

Kids get immunizations

**South Bay Juvenile Detention Facility**

Teen gets various treatments and services to help prepare for his future

Legend
HHSA
Public Safety
Community Services
LUEG
FG <sup>3</sup> /BOS
Community Partner

Family is on track!

Administrative support departments manage and coordinate programs and their financing, while striving for ongoing improvement in the services HHSA provides to the community.



**H** HSA strives to be a voice and leader for the people we serve. We are a source of education, information and support. We strive to inspire public trust by being proactive, collaborative and aiming for excellence in government. To stay on top of the latest developments, HHSA participates in numerous industry organizations. Following are just a few examples. Let us know of your activities!

## California State Association of Counties (CSAC)

Members are county supervisors - San Diego County Supervisor **Greg Cox** is President, Supervisor **Bill Horn** is on the Board, and CAO **Walt Ekard** received a CSAC Service Award for 2004.

"The primary purpose of CSAC is to represent county government before the California Legislature, administrative agencies and the federal government. CSAC places a strong emphasis on educating the public about the value and need for county programs and services."

## County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA)

Members are directors - HHSA members include: **Jean Shepard**, HHSA Director; **Joan Zinser**, Acting Director, Child Welfare Services.

CWDA "is a non-profit association representing the human service directors from each of California's 58 counties. The Association's mission is to promote a human services system that encourages self-sufficiency of families and communities, and protects vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect."

## County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC)

Members are specialists in various areas within health and human services, including agency directors. HHSA members include: **Jean Shepard**, HHSA Director; and **Steve Hon**, Senior Program Manager, Medical Care Program Administration.

"Our members are responsible for the administration of a broad range of public health programs and indigent health care systems at the local level. The purpose of our organization is to identify current local public health and indigent health policy issues, and to recommend to appropriate levels of local and state government the policy positions or actions to address those issues."

## National Association of Counties (NACo)

Members are county and corporate officials, and include San Diego County Supervisor **Greg Cox**, and **Joan Zinser**, Acting Director, Child Welfare Services.

"NACo is a full-service organization that provides an extensive line of services including legislative,

research, technical, and public affairs assistance, as well as enterprise services to its members. The association acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties and provides them with resources to help them find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face. NACo is involved in a number of special projects that deal with such issues as the environment, sustainable communities, volunteerism and intergenerational studies."

## American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)

Members are healthcare executives - **Nick Macchione**, North Central, North Coastal, and North Inland Regions Deputy Director, was recently elected to the the Council of Regents.

"Founded in 1933, [ACHE] is an international professional society of 30,000 healthcare executives who lead our nation's hospitals, healthcare systems, and other healthcare organizations."

## County Alcohol & Drug Program Administrators Association of California (CADPAAC)

Members are county alcohol and drug program administrators - **Connie Moreno-Peraza**, HHSA Alcohol and Drug Services Director, is President.

"CADPAAC is dedicated to the reduction of individual and community problems (from public safety to education, to health care) related to the use of alcohol and other drugs."

## Other organizations that HHSA actively participates in:

- California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) - HHSA member: **Nancy Bowen**, M.D., Public Health Officer
- Health Officers Association of California (HOAC) - HHSA member: **Nancy Bowen**, M.D., Public Health Officer
- State of California, County Issues HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) Workgroup - HHSA's **Cynthia Paes**, HIPAA Privacy Officer, is co-chair
- California Mental Health Directors Association (CMHDA) - HHSA member: **Alfredo Aguirre**, Director, Adult & Children's Mental Health Services
- California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH)
- Emergency Medical Services Administrators' Association of California (EMSAAC) - HHSA member: **Patti Murrin**, EMS Coordinator
- First 5 Commission of California - HHSA member: **Laura Spiegel**, Executive Director, First 5 Commission of San Diego
- San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
- San Diego Workforce Partnership

**Many associations recognized the Agency's excellence and quality work. Awards received in Fiscal Year 2003-04 include:**

**NACo presented awards for the following HHSA programs:**

- Contracts Training Academy
- Earn It, Keep It, Save It! Program
- HHSA Revenue Project
- East Region Way Station
- Health Advisory Committee on Terrorism
- Emergency Medical Alert Network
- "You Can Work"

NACo and the **National Organization on Disability** co-sponsored one nation-wide 2004 Award of Excellence and presented it to the "You Can Work" program. **CSAC** also awarded the "You Can Work" program with a 2004 Merit Award.

**CSAC** awarded San Pasqual Academy with a 2003 California Community Partnership Award, and the **California Chapter of the American Planning Association** presented SPA with a 2003 State Planning Award.

**The International Council on Active Aging** presented an Industry Innovators Award for Aging & Independence Service's Feeling Fit Club Program.

**The Performance Institute recognized Innovations in Public-Private Partnerships in:**

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs); and the Child Assessment Network North (CANN).

**The Federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention** presented the HHSA

Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral (SBIR) Program with the 2003 Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Program Award.

**Organizations that have recognized other San Diego County departments for excellence in 2004 include:**

- California Chapter of the American Planning Association
- California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS)
- Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)
- Pacific Southwest Regional Council, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) Department of Toxic Substances Control
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Association of Environmental Professionals
- California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health
- National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Directors
- National Prevention Network
- Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
- Administration on Aging (AOA)
- International Council on Active Aging
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA)
- Southern California and Nevada (SCAN) National Association of Telecommunications Officers Association (NATOA) Chapter
- San Diego Psychiatric Society
- The San Diego Design Institute
- National Public Library Association Conference
- The Child Support Directors Association of California

For more information on County-wide awards, take a look at the [County's Operation Plan](#).



## Employee Kudos

**Nilla Hamilton**, section chief at the **Polinsky Children's Center**, was honored at the 11th annual State ICWA Conference. The program says: "This award recognizes agencies and outstanding professionals in the field of child welfare services who have demonstrated knowledge, leadership and compassion in the implementation of ICWA...Nilla Hamilton...has 28 years experience working in children's services and continues to be a strong advocate for Indian families and ICWA. From 1994 to 2001 she was a supervisor in the Indian Specialty Unit of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, which has been put forth as a national model for counties, states and federal entities as they implement ICWA in a collaborative manner."

**O**n Nov 15th, **San Diego County Adoptions (Nuestros Ninos)** met with an adoption delegation from Tajikistan. This delegation was comprised of Supreme Court Judge Lola Khojaeva, Deputy Governor Latofat Sharipova, Cherkhon Salimov (Member of Parliament), Mahira Usamanova (Chief of Education), and Abdulnazar Gulomaseinov (Chairman of the Board of Attorneys). The purpose of their trip was to gain an understanding of the U.S. adoption process. This trip was arranged by Meridian International Center who arranged for the Tajikistan delegates to meet with other delegates in Washington, D.C. and to observe one adoption agency in the United States. San Diego County Adoptions was honored to be chosen as the model of a public adoption agency with progressive, state-of-the-art adoptive placement and recruitment methods. Nuestros Ninos made a formal presentation to this delegation regarding our adoption process, placement, and recruitment efforts. San Diego County Adoptions has received nationwide recognition regarding its progressive adoption model that finds permanent families for children.

**Cindy Ropp-Ritcher**, Analyst II in Children's Mental Health just completed the certificated Government Contract Management program at San Diego State University. **Jack Pellegrino**, Agency Contracts Support Director, manages the program which consists of six courses. Cindy started the program when she worked at the Department of Purchasing and Contracting and continued when she went to work for Children's Mental Health.



Cindy Ropp-Ritcher

**Elizabeth Reyes**, a Senior Medical Records Technician with the Office of Vital Records, recently received an International Classification of Diseases Medical Coding Certification (i.e. nosology) from the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She's one of a select few to have received the certification.

**Anne Cordon**, San Diego Immunization Registry (SDIR) Program Manager, received a Community Service Award from Blue Cross on January 13. The award was for her work in getting the SDIR on the Internet with its own Web site, which makes it much more accessible to private providers. The recognition event will be held at the Mission Valley Hilton.

### Remember to send in kudos!

Please send text (and photo) to: Jennifer.Mallory@sdcounty.ca.gov, or to your section editor.

### Have Some News?

Please submit article ideas to your section editor listed below, or to Jennifer Mallory, via Outlook e-mail.



County of San Diego  
Health and Human Services Agency

#### Board of Supervisors

Greg Cox, District 1      Dianne Jacob, District 2  
Pam Slater-Price, District 3      Ron Roberts, District 4  
Bill Horn, District 5

#### Chief Administrative Officer

Walter F. Ekard

#### Health and Human Services Agency Director

Jean M. Shepard

The HHS Connection is produced by the Office of Media and Public Affairs, a section of the Health and Human Services Agency Strategy and Planning Division

#### Editor

Jennifer Mallory

#### Section Editors

Aging & Independence Services: Denise Nelesen  
Alcohol & Drug Services: .....Ron Yardley  
Central Region: .....Elise Lorentz  
Child Welfare Services: .....Cathi Palatella  
East Region: .....Eve Leon-Torres  
Financial & Support Services: .....Marion Morris  
Information Technology: .....Maria Tellez  
Mental Health: .....Bonita Maglioli  
North Central Region: .....Nina Constantino  
North Coastal Region: .....Nina Constantino  
North Inland Region: .....Nina Constantino  
Public Health: .....Pete Sison  
Resource Development: .....Denis McGee  
South Region: .....Sharney McLaughlin

Compliance Office: (619) 515-4244

Toll-Free Hotline: (866) 549-0004

*An ethical workplace is your right...and your responsibility...*